

SPAIN UNDER THE DICTATORSHIP

by

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with the aid of the Research Staff of the Foreign Policy Association

Miss Waddell was given leave of absence by the Foreign Policy Association for six months during 1928 for the purpose of gaining a more intimate acquaintance with Spanish affairs. The present report is the result of her observations in Madrid and the provinces and of further study given to Spanish affairs since her return to New York.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DICTATORSHIP

ON September 13, 1923 Primo de Rivera led a successful *coup d'état* and took over the reins of Spanish government. He is still in power, but recent predictions of imminent drastic changes in Spanish government raise the question of how the Prime Minister achieved his present paramount position, what policies he has pursued in office, and when the transition to constitutional government may be expected.

Primo de Rivera's program was outlined in the *pronunciamiento* of September 13, 1923 addressed to the nation. His purpose, he declared, was to correct the abuses of the old politicians and to effect a house-cleaning in all branches of government; to bring the campaign for the pacification of Morocco to a successful end and to determine where responsibility lay for the successive disastrous defeats suffered by the Spanish troops in Morocco; to re-establish the authority of the government in Catalonia; and to call a new Assembly to effect all the necessary reforms in a legal manner. It was not his intention to undermine the Constitution. General elections were to be held and the electors, unfettered by allegiance to any political group, were to pronounce their will. This return to constitutional government he expected to accomplish within ninety days, after which he would pass the reins over into more experienced hands.

The Dictator chose his first cabinet exclusively from the military ranks, but in December 1925 this group was succeeded by the so-called Civil Directorate composed of three generals, an admiral and five civilians,

a proportion which still prevails in the Directorate.

Today many Spaniards are agreed that the Prime Minister was sincere in his statement that on assuming office he desired nothing but the welfare of Spain. He was scornful alike of Conservative and Liberal politicians, charging that while they fought over the distribution of State revenue the nation was becoming completely disorganized. And this state of affairs was admitted even by members of the ruling parties. Don Antonio Maura, five times Prime Minister, said in a speech after his second term of office:

"It has become traditional that public office in Spain is neither exercised nor sought after for the purpose of protecting rights, upholding justice, encouraging culture, developing prosperity or directing the life of the nation along the channels to which the national genius fits it. . . . Underneath the constitutional framework, what really exists is a chieftainship (*cacicato*) which edits the official Gazette and distributes the State revenue. The political parties fight for this tool. . . . Systematic sedition in the name of order; violence and proscription in the name of liberty; democratic intrigue at the back-door of the barracks; all imaginable forms of factious life. Never obeisance to abstract moderation in authority, nor perseverance to vindicate right, nor tenacity to exercise the functions of citizenship. . . . "¹

Rapidly changing administrations (between March 22, 1918 and September 13, 1923 there were twelve different cabinets) had been unable to cope efficiently with the problems presented in Morocco and Catalonia.

¹. R. T. Desmond, "The New Régime in Spain," *Foreign Affairs*, New York, March 15, 1924.

UNREST IN CATALONIA

In Catalonia² the government was faced with two serious situations: one, the home-rule movement; and the other, labor unrest. The first of these was created by the agitation of two distinct groups—the so-called Regionalists and the Separatists. The Regionalists wished to continue within the Spanish nation but desired a greater degree of autonomy in provincial affairs. Their demands were summed up as follows:³

"1. The creation of an autonomous Catalan state which would be supreme in all local affairs of Catalonia.

"2. A parliament or other legislative Assembly responsible only to the Catalan people.

"3. A Catalan executive or Government responsible only to the Assembly.

"4. The old laws and constitution of Catalonia to be again put in force through the Assembly.

"5. A separate Catalan Judicature, with the Supreme Catalan Court as final court of appeal in Catalan affairs.

"6. The Catalan language to be the only official one, and to be freely used when desired in private intercourse, and in all official matters concerning Catalonia.

"7. A federal union with the other Spanish peoples, exclusively for foreign affairs, the army and navy, coinage, weights and measures, trade, customs, general communications, etc."

The second group of agitators, the Separatists, wished, as their name implies, to separate Catalonia entirely from the rest of Spain and to establish it as an independent nation. This extreme position was taken by only a small group, but as they made much more noise than the Regionalists, they brought down the wrath of the central government upon the heads of all.

The second problem facing the government in Catalonia, as already stated, was the labor situation. Although labor unrest

2. Catalonia, a region made up of four provinces in the extreme northeast of the Iberian peninsula, flourished under independent rulers, the Counts of Barcelona, until a marriage with the royal family of Aragon eventually brought it in 1416 into the Spanish State. The language used in the provinces was Catalan and there exist documents written completely in that dialect dating from the eleventh century. The Catalans feel that ever since their incorporation into the Spanish State they have been despoiled by the Madrid government. First, Ferdinand II in his attempt to unify Spain suppressed all popular liberties then existing in Catalonia. Later, after the discovery of America, Sevilla was given the monopoly of trade with the colonies, while Barcelona, the most important Catalan city and up to then the most flourishing Spanish port, declined in prosperity. And in more recent times the Catalans resented the heavy taxing of their growing industries, the proceeds of which, they declared, were squandered in Madrid or used for public improvements in other provinces.

3. Frank B. Deakin. *Spain Today*. London. The Labour Publishing Company, Ltd., 1924, p. 155 ff.

was prevalent throughout the rest of Spain, it was especially acute in the industrial center of Barcelona, where the great activity of war years had begun to decline. Strikes were frequent. To meet this situation the Conservative government organized groups of strike-breakers, but this move only made matters worse, for strikers and strike-breakers were soon fighting on the streets. In the year ending September 1923 in the province of Barcelona alone—where Red organizations were most numerous—337 workers and employers were killed in strikes, riots and reprisals and 434 were wounded.⁴

MILITARY REVERSES IN MOROCCO

It was the Moroccan situation, however, which actually precipitated the *coup d'état* of September 1923 in Madrid. After a series of military reverses (culminating in the tragedy at Annual⁵ in July 1921, which in one day cost Spain over 10,000 soldiers), public opinion became so inflamed that a commission of twenty-one Parliament members was appointed to determine where responsibility lay. The Moroccan campaign was intensified, but the advance, when it was resumed, was conducted so slowly (although over 100,000 Spaniards were opposed by only a few thousand Moors) that the question of "responsibility" continued to be a vital issue. Instead of following the usual procedure and condemning two or three generals, the Committee of Twenty-One, under the chairmanship of General Picasso, went to the root of the whole matter, holding secret hearings in Morocco as well as in Madrid. In the summer of 1922 the Picasso report was finished and submitted to the Council of Ministers. It was promptly suppressed, but not before some inkling as to its contents had leaked out. It is said that the report implicated not only the governing and military classes, but the King as well, for transmitting orders directly to the front in disregard of the Ministry of War. The report recommended death penalties for many of the high commanding generals in Morocco and for several of the Ministers at

4. *La Nación* (the official government paper in Madrid), special edition of September 13, 1928, celebrating the fifth anniversary of the de Rivera régime.

5. A military outpost near the Bay of Alhucemas.

home. It also suggested that certain steps be taken to remedy the whole political situation in Spain. It is reported that one of these was to have been the abolition of the monarchy.

When it became clear that the Picasso report was being shelved, public protest meetings were held and both the press and Parliament demanded that the report be published. Parliament was immediately dissolved by the King, perhaps in the hope that the storm would blow over. After new elections, however, it was found that the situation still remained unchanged. On September 15, 1923 the Supreme Council of War and Navy was to convene, presided over by General Aguilera, who firmly intended to carry out the recommendations of the Picasso report no matter what high authorities were implicated. On September 20 a Parliamentary committee was to meet and make known its recommendations on the question of "responsibility"; and on October 2 the newly elected Assembly was to hold its first session. These plans were never carried out, however, for Primo de Rivera's *coup d'état* on September 13 put an end to all constitutional proceedings; the Picasso report disappeared, and the question of "responsibility" was never thoroughly threshed out.

THE COUP D'ETAT ACCEPTED

Whether or not Primo de Rivera was acting on his own initiative it is still impossible to say. He is an aristocrat by birth and before the *coup d'état* had served the Monarchy in Cuba, in the Philippines and in Morocco, but not very long in Spain. He was an ardent supporter of the Monarchy and he despised the politicians in Madrid. He was, therefore, at least following his inclinations when on September 13 he headed the *coup d'état*. His years of service in Morocco had impressed him with the disorganization, negligence and dishonesty which prevailed in official circles. He had often protested against the "butchery" of Spanish soldiers in a futile attempt to guard a piece of territory which, he said, could never be of much use to Spain; and he had been punished twice for such heresies. In 1917, for instance, when he was Military Governor of

Cádiz he declared in a speech that the Moroccan campaign was futile; and that Spain should get rid of Morocco, exchanging it perhaps for Gibraltar; for strategically it would be a weak spot in time of war. (This recommendation, in spite of the evident unlikelihood of its execution is still considered in certain quarters.) For this he was dismissed from office and placed in the reserve ranks. Later, however, with another party in power, he was made Military Governor of Madrid. Here on November 26, 1921, when feeling was running high after the Annual disaster, he again expressed a similar opinion, although he admitted that Spain should first retrieve her honor by dominating the situation. This time he was imprisoned, only to be reinstated a second time; and it was as Military Governor of Barcelona that he took control of power and issued the *pronunciamiento* summarized above.

The two great parties which up to this time had managed Spanish affairs were the Conservative and the Liberal. The former drew its supporters from the army, the clergy and the capitalist classes. It was Catholic, monarchical, averse to any reform and believed in maintaining order, whether in Morocco or in Catalonia, by force.

The Liberal party was theoretically more democratic, although in practice it differed little from the Conservative. It favored seeking an economic solution of the labor problem, but was never in power long enough to counteract the Conservative policy of force. In Morocco it believed that the task of pacification should be under the direction of a Civil High Commissioner who would put more emphasis on public improvements and education than on repression. But the Conservative policy prevailed. In December 1922, however, popular protest against the Conservative policy and its attempt to hush up the Picasso report became so sharp that the Conservative Prime Minister, Sr. Sánchez Guerra, resigned. In the elections which followed, the Liberal party won a sweeping victory; but when Parliament tried to take up the question of "responsibility" that body was dissolved and with the advent of the Dictatorship was doomed not to meet again.

Although the *coup d'état* was not actively opposed, it was actively supported only by

the army, which had the greatest grievances against the preceding régimes. The prestige of the army, already sadly diminished since 1898, had suffered a great blow in the Annual disaster. The rank and file of the army and lesser officers wished to vindicate themselves and have the blame for the occurrences in Morocco placed where they believed it belonged—viz., on a few high officers and on the politicians who bickered endlessly in Parliament over every grant, however urgent, for material, clothing and food—appropriations which, when finally made, never reached their destination intact.

With the exception of the army, the only organized body in Spain is the Church. Primo de Rivera, coming to power at a time of chaos when even the Monarchy was in danger, proclaimed the motto, "Fatherland, Monarchy, Religion." He put an end to the movement which threatened to implicate the King himself in the question of "responsibility." A *coup d'état* which bolstered up the power of His Most Catholic Majesty and incidentally that of the Church naturally was not opposed by the latter.

What Primo de Rivera promised the Catalan leaders—ever ready to demand autonomy at the least sign of weakness in the central government—is not yet known. It is charged, however, that since the advent of the Dictatorship no other region in Spain has been so favored in a material way, as,

for example, in the matter of tariff protection. It was a significant fact, moreover, that in September 1923 Catalonia did not secede when constitutional government was overturned.

On seeing the peaceful manner in which the overthrow of the old political parties had been effected, the nobility, large property holders and business men—all who had anything to lose in a revolution—were only too glad to try a new régime, hoping it might really herald a new era of peace and order. The mass of peasants, exclusively interested in their own local affairs, hardly understood what had happened and were indifferent. Even a section of liberal opinion, as represented by one of the most influential papers in Madrid, *El Sol*, neither condemned nor praised Primo de Rivera's action. *El Sol* merely stated that it would pay more attention to the deeds than to the words of the Directorate. And ex-Minister Ossorio y Gallardo, one of the leaders of liberal thought, although a member of the Conservative party, said in an editorial on the *coup d'état*:

"When the rebels boast of having interpreted the popular will, they are right. In the depths of each citizen's conscience there flourishes a flower of gratitude for those who have checked the rotation of avarice. But there immediately arises another dramatic anxiety. Will the remedy be worse than the infirmity?"

THE RECORD OF THE DICTATORSHIP

The test will not come until the Premier considers his task accomplished and resigns in favor of what he terms a constitutional government. But whether or not that body will be constitutional according to the 1923 definition or according to a new standard set by the Dictatorship is still a question. A new constitution has already been drafted by a special committee of the Consultative National Assembly, but it has met with so much criticism that it will probably be greatly modified before it is submitted to a plebiscite.

The preliminary draft was published on July 6, 1929 and the government has relaxed censorship somewhat to allow ample discussion of it. Moreover, the government

has even provided for the inclusion of forty-nine former political leaders in the Assembly which is to prepare the final draft.⁶

It is the general opinion of all but the most ardent supporters of the present administration that the new constitution is reactionary and constitutes a return to absolutism. The opposition press asserts that the draft is unconstitutional, for it was drawn up by an unconstitutional body subservient to the Dictatorship. Moreover, it believes that the draft is too long and complicated to be made the basis of a plebiscite. It suggests, therefore, that the draft be made the program of a government party—the *Unión Patriótica*, for example—and that

⁶. Royal decree of July 29, 1929. Extract published in *La Prensa*, New York, July 30, 1929.

other parties be allowed to draw up their own programs. Elections should then be held in which all these parties should be allowed to participate. The Constituent Assembly would then be truly representative and would be competent to suggest reforms to be incorporated in the Constitution of 1876.

The main innovations in the draft constitution published in July 1929 tend to fortify the power of the King. The bicameral Cortes existing in 1923 is reduced to one chamber of over 400 members.⁷ Half of these are to be elected by universal suffrage from among a restricted group; thirty members are to be named by the King, and the rest elected by classifications or corporations. It is declared by the opposition that this mixture of interests will introduce a division among the members themselves and result in lack of cooperation. The draft constitution provides also for the creation of a new body—the Council of State⁸—to be composed of thirty-six members, half of whom occupy their posts for life, either in their own right or by appointment of the King. The remaining eighteen are to be elected by various classifications and professions. This new body cannot be compared with the second chamber of the old Cortes, which prior to 1923 was composed of 360 members. The functions of the proposed Council of State are to be mainly advisory.

PROVISIONS OF DRAFT CONSTITUTION

Formerly the initiative for legislation re-sided "in the Cortes with the King."⁹ The draft of the new constitution, however, declares in Article 62 that

"The King with his responsible government [the Ministers] and the Cortes will have the exclusive initiative of legislation; but the initiation of laws referring to foreign policy or concordats, national defense or constitutional reform, and those which entail a decrease in taxation or an increase in public expenditures will be the exclusive prerogative of the King and his responsible government."

"Those laws referring to government expenditure and income which have previously received

7. New constitution, Article 54 ff. Published in *El Sol*, Madrid, July 7, 1929.

8. *Ibid.*, Article 44 ff.

9. Constitution of 1876, Article 18.

the approval of one-fifth of the deputies are excluded from the above provision."

In other words, the initiation of most of the legislation is the prerogative of the King "and his responsible government," but as will be seen later, this government itself is not responsible to anyone but the King.¹⁰

The new draft also provides that any legislation approved by the Cortes may be rejected by the Council of State.¹¹ In such cases, after a new vote in which the Cortes either refuses or accepts the suggestions made by the Council of State, the law goes to the King, who in his turn may approve or reject it. Moreover, no provision is made in the new draft similar to that in the 1876 Constitution by which a law vetoed by the King may be re-enacted by the succeeding legislature.¹²

Still another article provides that should the Cortes be "slow" in approving a bill which the government believes to be urgent and necessary, the executive power may put it into force by decree after consulting the Council of State (a fourth of whose members are appointed by the King).¹³ These laws must be approved by the Cortes within two months or they will be considered null and void. It is pointed out, however, that some legislation will already have fulfilled its purpose within the two months, as for example in the case of a special taxation or recruiting measure.

Another indication of the absolutist tendency of the project is found in the provision that the Cortes may not vote its political approval or disapproval of the Ministers or other executive officials.¹⁴ It therefore exercises no influence in the selection or replacement of Ministers, who need only enjoy the confidence of the King to govern.

Finally, after consultation with the Council of State, the King may suspend the Cortes whenever he sees fit.¹⁵ He is also empowered, after consultation with the Council of State, to suspend all constitutional guarantees "when grave internal disturbances menace the general peace."¹⁶ As a result the King at any time may constitutionally suspend

10. Cf. below.

11. New constitution, Article 52.

12. Constitution of 1876, Article 44.

13. New constitution Article 53.

14. *Ibid.*, Article 60.

15. *Ibid.*, Article 48, paragraph 2.

16. *Ibid.*, Article 72.

the Cortes and return to a dictatorial form of government.

The main significance of the new draft lies not so much in its contents, for these will probably be greatly modified, but in the fact that the Prime Minister, by publishing it and providing for its ample discussion in the press and the Assembly, demonstrates his belief that the time has come for terminating the Dictatorship and returning to constitutional government.

OFFICIAL CATALOGUE OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Although slow progress has been made in the political development of the country under Primo de Rivera, much is claimed by the Dictatorship in the realm of material progress. In an official statement to the press on March 5, 1929, the Premier summarized the work he has accomplished in the following manner:

"If the present administration had not counted with the enormous amount of public opinion which supports it, it would already have succumbed to the obstinate campaign of attacks from outside the country and inhibitions and silences within. But it is a rare Spaniard indeed who by this time has not in some way felt the beneficent consequences of being well governed. Peace in Morocco and within the country, personal safety, reduction of the term of military service, subsidies to large families, the creation of thousands of schools and some institutes, protection to agriculture; higher wages, social legislation, old age pensions and adequate establishments for the correction of delinquents, many and good roads, irrigation works, sanitariums, hospitals, dispensaries, sewerage, water supplies, dozens of bridges, modern armaments, powerful navy units, small increases in the income of the lower clergy and dependent classes (widows and orphans of government employees, soldiers, etc.), appropriate establishments for our representatives abroad, treaties of commerce and of peace and arbitration—all these constitute an achievement which only a stupid people could fail to appreciate. . . ."

Concrete information on these achievements is as yet not available, for government statistics are often two and three years behind. However, a brief summary of the data available follows.

THE PACIFICATION OF MOROCCO

A period of calm in Spanish Morocco after the establishment of the Dictatorship was broken in May 1924 and by August the Spanish troops were again hard-pressed to defend their posts. In the month of September 1924, Primo de Rivera took personal command of the campaign, assisted by three other members of the Military Directorate. The troops were withdrawn from far-flung battle lines to present a shorter and more compact front, but this move was accompanied by a loss of thousands of lives.

The turning point of the campaign came in April 1925 when "to our great fortune" Abd-el-Krim, "whose head had undoubtedly been turned by his sultanate (whom the Gods would destroy they first make mad), had the foolhardiness to attack numerous French posts. . . ."¹⁷ This was indeed a tactical error, for by angering the French, Abd-el-Krim assured Franco-Spanish cooperation in the Riff. Thus by July 12, 1927, with the invaluable assistance of the French, the whole zone was subdued and an era of peaceful reconstruction set in.

A special edition of *El Debate*, published in May 1928 for the Cologne press exposition, gives the official account of the Moroccan campaign. According to its figures, \$800,000,000 were spent in Morocco in eighteen years, and for longer than a decade the loss of Spanish soldiers reached the high peak of over 13,000 men annually. But by 1926 the losses fell to 2,500 and since 1927 they have remained at zero. Moreover, since 1927 there have been 250 kilometers of roads built in Morocco, ports have been improved, and railroads constructed to link the principal ports and towns. Schools, hospitals and sanitariums have also been financed by the government. "Spain, therefore, has done something more than punish the rebels."

In this connection it is interesting to note that of the 1927, 1928 and 1929 budgets for the administration of Spanish Morocco, 85 per cent goes to the upkeep of the navy and army, and less than two-tenths of 1 per cent is used for education, sanitation, and public

^{17.} *El Debate*, special edition, May 1928, an official version of the Riff campaign.

works.¹⁸ The bulk of public improvements is actually being financed by loans underwritten by the Madrid government. So far a total of about \$12,000,000 has been floated to cover five years' expenditures.

APPROPRIATIONS FOR DEFENSE

The Dictator claims that since 1925 a large reduction in army cadres has been effected. The Minister of War reports that 748 officers left the army during that period, "of whom 378 did so voluntarily in order to take office in other departments of the government."¹⁹ Some commentators assert that those officers who "voluntarily" took office in other departments of the government, were not incurring any great sacrifice. The present cabinet, as they point out, is composed principally of military officers; they rule the provinces, they figure at the head of corporations controlling national concessions, and have in general bettered their positions by leaving the army.²⁰

A casual glance at the 1921 and 1929 ordinary budgets would seem to indicate a reduction in appropriations for national defense. The appropriation for the Department of War in the ordinary budget for 1929 is almost \$16,000,000 less than that for 1921, the year of the great Annual disaster. But the supplementary budget covering the period 1926-36 includes an average annual appropriation for the War Department of over \$9,500,000. Then, too, there were the

heavy increases in appropriations for the Navy Department (\$13,500,000 in the supplementary budget and \$6,500,000 in the 1929 budget). This, in spite of the reduction of \$16,000,000 mentioned above, brings the total budget appropriations for national defense in 1929 to about \$15,000,000 more than the 1921 figure. Spain is now spending more on national defense than it did in the days of Riff fighting. This is necessary, according to the Dictator, in order to bring the army and navy up to date in the matter of equipment.

El Sol, in an editorial on December 15, criticizes this expenditure:

"With a diminished corps, according to the Minister [of Finance], and Morocco pacified . . . our defense still consumes about one-fourth of our budget, and we are proportionately at the head of the nations which pay most attention to the military preparation of its citizens . . . and the Minister still continues to announce increases in appropriations for the Navy Department."

THE BUDGET

The government has announced a budget surplus of almost \$2,000,000 for 1927 and \$30,000,000 for 1928. However, this applies only to the ordinary budget, and the supplementary budget drawn up in 1926 to provide for reconstruction work is not taken into account. The situation of the budget, as given in the official publication, *La Nación*, on September 13, 1928, together with the deficits under the supplementary budget, are as follows:

SPANISH BUDGETS (Figures given in millions)

Year	Ordinary Budget		Supplementary Budget		TOTAL DEFICIT Dollars	
	DEFICIT Pesetas	DEFICIT Dollars	SURPLUS Pesetas	SURPLUS Dollars		
1918	416.7	82.6	.....	.....	.....	82.6
1919-20	483.1	77.3	.....	.....	.....	77.3
1920-21	634.2	85.6	.....	.....	.....	85.6
1921-22	1,142.8	177.1	.....	.....	.....	177.1
1922-23	922.7	133.8	.....	.....	.....	133.8
1923-24	575.3	76.7	.....	.....	.....	76.7
1924-25	417.1	59.8	.....	.....	.....	59.8
1925-26	608.4	60.6	.....	.....	.....	60.6
2nd half 1926	170.0	25.3	.....	.....	(1926) 300	44.7
1927 .....	.....	.....	11.4	1.9	300	51.2
1928 .....	.....	.....	183.0	30.4	300	49.8
						19.4

There has been much criticism of the

18. *Gaceta de Madrid*, January 5, 1927; January 4, 1928; January 4, 1929.

19. *La Nación*, special edition, September 13, 1928.

20. Carleton Beals in *The Nation*, New York, June 26, and July 17, 1929.

supplementary budget on the ground that it tends to obscure the real condition of the State's finances.²¹ It is to run for ten years

21. Ex-Minister of Finance, Sr. Francisco Cambó, in *El Sol*, December 1928.

and provides for a total expenditure of about \$400,000,000. Internal loans totaling about \$190,000,000 have already been floated to cover expenses under the supplementary budget to the end of 1929. In other words, since 1926 there has been an average annual deficit in the supplementary budget of about \$45,000,000.

The deficit for 1928 is, therefore, according to these figures, approximately twenty million dollars, or only one-fourth as large as the smallest deficit in the five years preceding the Dictatorship.

In this connection it should also be noted that the present administration, in spite of the steady increase in government receipts, has been successful in cutting down the expenses of tax collection. In 1919 government receipts amounted to approximately 280 million dollars, and the expenses of collection amounted to 28 million, or approximately 10 per cent of the total. In 1923 the percentage was the same, whereas in 1927 and 1928 the expenses had fallen to a little over 4 per cent of the amounts collected.

FINANCIAL POLICY

In pre-war years the peseta was constantly below par in consequence of a chronic budget deficit and an unfavorable balance of payments.²² During the war Spain as a neutral power developed its export trade to the belligerent nations to such an extent that its balance of payments was completely reversed. Gold entered the country and the value of the peseta rose. After the end of the war, and with the re-establishment of competition, Spain's exports diminished, the balance of payments again showed a deficit, the budget deficit became larger and the peseta fell again.

One of the present administration's main concerns has been to stabilize the peseta and in time to put it on a gold basis. To this end it sought to improve the country's financial condition: first, by balancing the budget—an attempt in which it has not yet been wholly successful; secondly, by consolidating the public debt; and thirdly, by stimulating home production and discourag-

ing imports. As these measures could not be expected to bring immediate results, the government in 1928 resorted to "pegging."

Pursuant to its policy of consolidating and amortizing the public debt, the government in May 1926 established a Public Debt Amortization Fund to which, beside an annual budget appropriation of fifty million pesetas, were destined special revenues, notably certain customs duties and taxes on consumption. On February 4, 1927 it proceeded to a consolidation of the floating debt, which because of budget deficits had been growing for over ten years. On January 1, 1927 this debt reached a total of 5,255 million pesetas (\$875,000,000). By the consolidation operation which took place in February 4,810 million pesetas (\$800,000,000) of treasury bonds were voluntarily exchanged for 50-year 5 per cent bonds, and on February 16 it was decreed that the remaining bonds, amounting to 415 million pesetas (\$70,000,000), should either be redeemed or consolidated.

The floating debt thus having been entirely consolidated, the government in March 1928 effected another operation. The owners of perpetual 4 per cent certificates were given the opportunity of exchanging their securities for amortizable bonds, a nominal 100-peseta 4 per cent perpetual certificate to be exchanged for a nominal 80-peseta 3 per cent amortizable security. In this manner 3,500 million pesetas (\$580,000,000) of perpetual debts were converted into amortizable bonds, leaving a total of 8,660 million pesetas (\$1,440,000,000) still in perpetual securities.

Although these operations have not diminished the public debt—which, at present, is approximately nineteen billion pesetas (over \$3,000,000,000)—they have opened the way to regular amortization of the debt and consequently to a progressive diminution of the drain on the budget for service charges.

A series of decrees regulating practically every sort of production has been issued by the present régime in an attempt to foster home industries and agriculture. It is hoped that by this means the unfavorable balance of payments of late years may be diminished or transformed into a favorable balance.

22. "La situation économique et financière de l'Espagne," *L'Europe Nouvelle*, January 5, 1929.

These decrees will be more fully discussed below.

When in spite of all these measures the peseta continued to fluctuate, a decree of June 26, 1928 authorized the government to intervene on the exchange market to regulate the quotation of the peseta. The decree of June 26 created a "Committee of Exchange," presided over by the Minister of Finance and made up of representatives of the State and of the Bank of Spain. A fund of 500 million pesetas (about \$80,000,000) —half of which was made up by the Bank of Spain and the other half by the State—was set aside for the use of the committee. The committee is empowered to open credits, buy or sell foreign exchange, and make contracts with firms or private individuals for the effecting of payments or collections abroad. The committee is also charged with the control of all operations of foreign exchange and with the surveillance of the

execution of all laws related thereto. The decree of June 26 reinforces the measures previously taken by the government,²³ prohibiting the purchase of foreign exchange not justified by the exigencies of commerce; and it provides that the banks, firms or individuals authorized to effect operations of exchange should record these operations in a special register subject to the inspection of the Committee of Exchange at regular intervals.

Although the committee has been operating for almost a year, it has not been able to check the fluctuations of the peseta. This may be due in part to the fact that the budget has not really been balanced, that the import balance still continues large and that political conditions at the beginning of 1929 were extremely unsettled. The following table²⁴ summarizes average peseta quotations, wholesale price indices, gold reserve, budget deficits and balances of trade over a period of ten years:

A REVIEW OF SPAIN'S FINANCIAL POSITION

Year	Average Quotation	Wholesale Price Index	Cost of Living Index	Note Circulation	Gold Reserve	Budget Deficits ²⁵	Imports & Exports Total	Import Surplus
(In millions of dollars)								
1919	\$1982	204	175	\$759.3	\$472	.....	\$475.0	\$45.0
1920	1594	221	191	834.9	474	\$77.3	390.9	64.6
1921	1353	190	189	819.1	485	85.6	597.8	169.1
1922	1548	176	181	798.4	487	177.1	776.4	266.9
1923	1445	172	177	837.2	488	138.8	859.4	270.2
1924	1334	183	184	875.2	489	76.7	914.5	223.2
1925	1434	188	189	856.9	490	59.8	740.0	128.3
1926	1490	181	186	837.4	493	130.6	725.5	105.7
1927	1706	173	190	811.0	502	49.3	864.8	133.4
1928	1659	168	176	822.3	494	19.4	.....	.....
1929								
Jan.	1630	171	184	832.2	494	.....	.....	.....
Feb.	1556	173	183	828.7	494	.....	.....	.....
Mar.	1507	174	184	818.9	494	.....	.....	.....
Apr.	1475	....	....	821.8	494	.....	.....	.....
May	1422	....	....	....	....	....	....	....

In his official statements the Prime Minister often deals with the monetary situation. He believes that the recent fluctuations of the peseta are attributable almost entirely to the operations of speculators.

He is probably correct, but it might be pointed out that conditions must be favorable for speculation or the peseta would not be so easily affected. One of the conditions which has probably stimulated speculation

is the rapid expansion of commercial credit during the last decade and a half. A study of the balance sheets of the five most important banks in Spain from 1914 to 1927 (a summary of which follows) shows that while their liquid assets were four times larger in 1927 than in 1914, the amount of

23. Royal orders of March 6, 9 and 11 and April 10, 1928.

24. Compiled from figures quoted in the *Federal Reserve Bulletin* and the *Commerce Yearbook* (U. S. Department of Commerce).

25. Cf. p. 227. Figure for 1926 includes six months of 1925.

credit granted on the basis of these assets was ten times larger in 1927 than in 1914. In other words, in 1914 the ratio of liquid assets to credits was as 1 to 3, whereas in 1927 it was as 1 to 8.

BALANCE SHEETS OF FIVE SPANISH BANKS*

(In thousands of pesetas)

	1914	1927
Paid up capital	103,000	341,000
Reserves	23,902	162,878
Profits	7,223	72,750
Average Dividends	6.10%	12%
Accounts Receivable	272,229	2,728,000
Commercial portfolio	158,113	1,844,000

**L'Europe Nouvelle*, January 5, 1929.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Under Primo de Rivera a determined effort has been made to foster the production in Spain and by Spanish companies of everything which is essential to the nation. This doctrine of the defense of national production has led to what is practically the control of industry by the State. In 1927 the Spanish government created a Regulating Committee of Industrial Production. It was ordained that without a favorable report from this committee no new industry should be created, and no existing industry extended or transformed.

Industries or businesses from which foreigners derived profits have one by one been brought under the control of the government by royal decrees and turned over to national companies. The distribution of petroleum, which was formerly in the hands of British, French and American companies, is now a government monopoly.²⁶ In 1927 it was decreed that Spanish coal consumers should use Spanish coal in proportion of from 40 to 60 per cent and a national distributing center was created.²⁷ The decree of April 6, 1925 ordered insurance companies to deposit the whole sum of their reserves in Spain. This order was repeated on December 12, 1928 and compliance required within eight days, at the end of which all books were to be ready for inspection, showing that the reserves were held in the Spanish securities specified by the Department of Insurance and Savings.

26. *Gaceta de Madrid*, June 30, 1927.

27. *Ibid.*, September 18, 1927.

Again, in the matter of aviation, on January 9, 1928 bids were opened for the operation of sixteen national and international lines. There were two bids, but the government would accept neither, suggesting that the two companies merge. The suggestion was accepted and a company made up of banks and airplane manufacturers was formed to take over the contract. A minimum capital was stipulated, which is to be increased as the development of aviation demands, at the discretion of the Supreme Council of Aeronautics (the body charged by the government with the direction of aviation in Spain). Airships are subject to the inspection of this council, which is also to designate types of plane to be employed. The capital, administration and equipment of the company must be Spanish. The company will not have a monopoly of exploitation, but will receive an annual subsidy of at least 1.5 million pesetas (\$250,000), while the government undertakes not to give its financial support to other competing lines.

The National Economic Council created in 1924 to take charge of these matters expanded so rapidly that in November 1928 it was given regular standing as one of the government departments—the Department of National Economy. New industries are daily being added to the list of monopolies or combinations under government control and the burden of subsidies undertaken by the government grows larger. At present subsidies to national shipping, automobile and motion picture corporations are under consideration, while monopolies in nitrates and radio transmission are being discussed.

This policy has been severely criticized in certain quarters, for it is alleged that concessions go only to supporters of the régime.²⁸ It is also pointed out that although these subsidies and monopolies benefit certain leaders of industry, they tend to increase prices generally.

The Prime Minister's efforts to encourage home production and legislation favoring national companies has made the present régime popular with the industrial classes. In fact, the middle classes—bankers, traders, merchants and industrialists—form an important nucleus among the supporters of the Prime Minister. It is generally admitted

28. *The Nation*, New York, July 17, 1929.

that any change in government at this time would be as radical as it threatened to be when Primo de Rivera intervened. It is, therefore, to the advantage of the business classes to support the Prime Minister until a gradual change under his direction can be effected. That they realize this has been shown on various occasions, notably in April 1929, when nearly every important industry, bank and business house was reported to have signed a statement of adherence to the present régime.²⁹ On the other hand it is remarked that should the present financial policy fail, the Dictatorship is doomed. Already there are many who believe that continued loans, the shortage of wheat and other crops, higher tariffs abroad on Spanish products and the Prime Minister's concessions policy are gravely endangering the financial stability of the country.

COMMUNICATIONS

In an effort to hasten the real unification of Spain, a great deal has been done by the present régime to develop means of communication between the various provinces of Spain. A nation-wide network of concrete roads has been planned, and through a system of subsidies municipalities have been encouraged to build and repair local dirt roads. In February 1926 a commission was created to administer the construction and improvement of a network of roads linking by direct routes all the principal cities in Spain. Over six million miles of road are included in this project.³⁰

The government also created a commission to direct the policies of the railroads. The royal decree of July 13, 1924 created a *Consejo Superior de Ferrocarriles* (National Railway Commission), made up of representatives of the State, the railway companies and concessionaires. This commission was entrusted with the organization and direction of plans for the improvement of the service—fusion of companies, combination of lines, fixing of rates, construction of new lines, electrification of others, etc. State funds were appropriated for this purpose and in addition an internal loan of

Ptas. 500,000,000 (\$80,000,000) was authorized.

In the matter of new lines, preference has been given to those stretches which when completed result in the greatest saving of time. For example, the construction of the stretch over the mountains between Madrid and Valencia, which heretofore have been skirted with long detours, will cut travelling time between those two important centers approximately in half.

These plans have been well received, but there is no telling when they will actually be carried out. In May 1928, *El Debate* says:

"As a matter of fact, nothing can yet be said of the practical results of the new system. It is still in the period of implantation and the grave problems presented have not yet been attacked. . . ."

AGRARIAN REFORM

In the field of agrarian reform, the present régime has undertaken much-needed legislation. The eventual prosperity of Spain, an agricultural country, depends to a large extent on its ability to produce a surplus over home consumption for export. Hitherto the peasant, who for the most part works only on rented land for an absentee proprietor, has not felt any incentive to produce as much as the land was capable of raising.

By royal decree of January 7, 1927, the present administration sought to hasten the breaking up of large estates.³¹ It ordered that the present tenants on estates which were not exploited by their owners should be given the opportunity of buying the acreage they were working. In order to facilitate this purchase a fund was created out of which 80 per cent of the purchase price was advanced to the peasant, to be returned in installments extending over twenty or twenty-five years.

This legislation is a step in the right direction. Whether or not it will yield significant results depends on the Prime Minister's willingness and ability to enforce it as regards the estates of his friends and supporters.

29. Spain, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, *Información Española*, May 1, 1929.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *La Nación*, September 13, 1928.

ARBITRATION OF LABOR PROBLEMS

On the advent of the Military Directorate, syndicalist organizations were suppressed and strikes were forbidden, thus depriving industrial workers of their only means of securing a hearing. This offered but a temporary solution of the labor problem and on November 26, 1926, by a decree providing for compulsory arbitration, steps were taken looking to a definite settlement.

One by one arbitration committees, made up of five representatives each of the employer and employee groups, have been set up for the principal industries, businesses and professions in Spain. Agriculture was excepted at first, but in May 1928 three agricultural groups were included in the system: rural proprietors and laborers; land owners and tenants; and producers and consumers of agricultural raw materials.

These local committees are at liberty to unite in Mixed Commissions with a view to controlling certain materials from production to consumption; or in nation-wide corporations, with a view to controlling any specific industrial process, business or profession. In each case the local arbitration committee elects an equal number of employers and employees as representatives to the Mixed Commissions or to the Council of Corporations. The latter in its turn elects a committee to work with the Minister of Labor, Industry and Commerce. Thus the recommendations of the local committees are transmitted to the Department of Labor and their representatives cooperate in suggesting legislation to meet labor problems.

This has greatly strengthened the Socialist party, but if, as many Spaniards assert, it was an attempt to win the support of the

party, the administration has failed in its purpose. Sr. Saborit, a leader of the Socialist party, on March 28, 1929 said: "The Socialist party does not support the present administration. It is only cooperating with the administration to obtain that which is its due."

EDUCATIONAL MEASURES

The gains made along educational lines since 1923, as officially given in *La Nación* for September 13, 1928, include the opening of 5,000 new schools and an increase of over 4,000 teachers. On the other hand, partisans of freedom in education (introduced in Spain half a century ago) claim that the de Rivera administration has taken several decidedly backward steps. The most flagrant example of this "reaction," perhaps, was the royal decree of March 1929 conceding to two Catholic institutions the right to grant their own diplomas, in spite of the fact that a bill to that effect had just been rejected by the Assembly.³² Other occurrences during the last two years are pointed to as indicating a return of Catholic domination in education:

1. Convent buildings long since sequestered and used for schools have been turned over to religious orders. On October 17, 1928, for instance, a decree conceded to a chapter of Benedictine Fathers in the province of Lugo full possession of the monastery in Villanueva de Lorenzana.

2. The "University City," which is being pushed with great vigor by the present administration with the support of the clergy, is thought to be a direct competitor of such centers of learning as the *Residencias*, the *Centro de Estudios Históricos* and the *Instituto Escuela*, which were founded by liberal intellectuals.

CAUSES OF UNREST

If almost six years of peace and the comparative prosperity of the country have gained for Primo de Rivera the support of the business classes, certain other aspects of the Dictatorship have, however, alienated various important elements of Spanish life.

In the first place, having saddled himself on the country, the Prime Minister found it impossible to carry out his plans in the short

time he allotted himself. Instead of staying three months he has stayed close on to six years. Although he has several times declared that the government was going to take immediate steps toward a return to a constitutional régime, the deed has never followed the word. In an official note to the press on June 12, 1928, he explained the reason for his delay:

^{32.} Cf. p. 233.

"I will not deny that I had hoped, or rather had the firm intention of abandoning my post in the month of October next. Several reasons brought me to that decision, principally the fact that I have well earned a legitimate rest. . . .

"The reasons for my changed attitude, however, should be quite apparent. The mere circulation of this rumor—of my intention to take another step toward the re-establishment of normalcy—caused a re-alignment amongst the former political parties, and it became evident that they still desired to intervene in public life under the same organizations as formerly. Of course this was a warning to me, confirming me fully in the opinion that my absence from power would result in the reappearance of all the old political vices."

Again in March 1929, following the Ciudad Real revolt of March 1928 and the student riots,³³ the Dictator intimated that he would soon retire, but five days later he added that this would not occur until after a new constitution had been approved by the Assembly and ratified through a plebiscite. At that time a new Assembly would be elected in which the people would be able to express their will unhampered by the old political allegiances. But Primo de Rivera was careful to point out that this would not take place before the end of 1930 or even 1931.

It is on this point that press opinion in Spain is unanimous in its condemnation of the present régime. *El Debate*, one of the staunchest supporters of Primo de Rivera, said shortly before the Ciudad Real revolt in January:

"We are beginning to suspect that we are losing some of the ground already gained. . . . We do not counsel great haste or delays; because there is nothing today which calls for a radical change of régime. But on the other hand, neither time nor energy should be wasted, nor the confidence of public opinion shaken, for once that is lost it is but slowly or never regained. Primo de Rivera is still strong enough to finish his undertaking. He would, however, regain many followers should Spain see him once more facing the problem of constitutionality with the generous and conciliating spirit formerly displayed."³⁴

SUSPENSION OF CONSTITUTION

The second cause for discontent among the critics of the present régime is that during this long period the Constitution has

been put aside and all vestiges of democratic government as provided for in that document have been ignored. Article 32 of the Constitution of 1876, in force until its suspension by Primo de Rivera late in 1923, charges the King with the "duty" of convoking the two legislative bodies (one of which is purely elective) within three months of their dissolution. Almost six years have elapsed and no steps to this end have been taken.

By the terms of Articles 41-44 of the Constitution, all legislation must be approved by the two Houses and sanctioned by the King. Since 1923 legislation has taken the form of royal decrees, which have never been submitted to the approval of any elected body. To meet this constitutional requirement partially, and perhaps because he was in honest search of advice, the Prime Minister appointed a Consultative National Assembly. It met on October 10, 1927, but has been unable to do anything more valuable than express its opinion on matters brought before it by the Prime Minister. And this opinion is acted upon or not as the government sees fit. The publication in March 1929 of the decree on educational reform allowing two Catholic universities to set up their own examining board is an example in point. There are eleven State universities in Spain. Private teaching is allowed, and it is practically all in the hands of religious institutions. These schools, however, are not permitted to grant titles or degrees of any sort, so that if their students wish to apply for a government appointment (and very little opportunity exists outside of government positions for engineers, pharmacists, doctors, teachers, etc.), they have to pass the government school examinations. When in February last the Consultative National Assembly discussed a bill to allow two Catholic institutions—viz., the Jesuit college at Deusto and the Augustine college at the Escorial—to set up their own examining boards and to grant degrees, the project was rejected by the Assembly, which termed it a reactionary step. Nevertheless the measure was published as a royal decree.

Such procedure has led to the resignation of members who sincerely hoped that by co-operating in the Assembly they might find a solution to the problem of the restoration

^{33.} Cf. p. 235 ff.

^{34.} Quoted in *La Prensa*, New York, February 4, 1929.

of constitutionality. In an open letter to the Prime Minister, which, however, was not published in Spain, Professor Sáinz Rodríguez gave the following reason for his resignation:

"The fact that you refused to allow my interpellation on the student conflict confirms me in my opinion, which I believe is shared by the whole of Spain, that the National Consultative Assembly is absolutely futile; for as in the present case, it often is not permitted to discuss matters of most vital interest to the nation, or an important section of the nation. . . ."³⁵

REPRESSIVE MEASURES

The third general grievance against the present régime is its use of repressive measures. Meetings for the discussion of political matters and the formation of political parties are expressly forbidden. Since the decree of September 27, 1923, the press has been subject to censorship. The government not only decided what should not be published, but in April 1929 it complained that the press was not devoting enough space to demonstrations favorable to the government, and commenced issuing official statements, which by a decree of February 3, 1929 the press was obliged to print free of charge.

Private conversation is also censored. On February 11 it was decreed that any one overheard criticizing the government or predicting a black future for it would be subject to a fine or imprisonment. An after-dinner speech by a noted Spanish author, Sr. Ramón del Valle Inclán, in which he poked fun at the Dictator, led to a decree prohibiting after-dinner speeches for the future. When, a few days later, at a dinner of the Lawyers' Club, the president arose to address the gathering, a policeman stepped up and reminded him of the decree. The president complied with the letter of the law but insisted on delivering his speech by means of gestures and mimicry, to the great delight of his audience. In many similar incidents the Dictator's attempts to bind more firmly his rapidly disintegrating support have been held up to ridicule.

Along with general measures of repression of this sort went other measures designed to apply especially to Catalonians. One of the first measures of the Military

District was to prohibit the use of the Catalan dialect and emblems in schools, churches and other public gatherings and to disband the centers of study directed by home rule organizations.^{36a} These measures have been largely effective in silencing home rule propaganda, but several recent incidents, news of which has leaked out of Spain, would seem to indicate that Catalan autonomy is not the dead question the Dictator wishes Spain to believe. On September 13, 1928, a plot to overthrow the Dictatorship was discovered in Barcelona; and in January 1929 that city was seriously implicated in a movement which the premature revolt of the Ciudad Real garrison disclosed.³⁶

On June 9, 1929, an indirect appeal for consideration of the Catalan problem, undetected by the official censor, appeared in the Madrid evening paper, *La Voz*. It reported that Foreign Minister Stresemann of Germany had said that the Spanish Basque provinces and Catalonia were included in the question of minorities which was to be discussed at the League of Nations Council meeting in Madrid. This report was immediately denied by the German Embassy in Madrid and called forth a long official statement by the Prime Minister in which he expressed his doubt that the German Foreign Minister should have been so tactless. He affirmed that in Spain no such problem existed, as "for four centuries national unity has been firm, deep-rooted and unshakable."

Yet one month later a newspaper correspondent outside of Barcelona answered in Catalan an invitation written in Spanish by asking that the invitation be translated into Catalan. On hearing of this, the Minister of the Interior, General Martínez Anido, ordered the governor of the province in which the correspondent was living to exile him for a month to the non-Catalan province of Teruel that he might "learn the official language of the country."³⁷

LEADERS CHARGED WITH INCOMPETENCE

In the fourth place, a large number of Spaniards believe that the present administration is not competent to put Spain on her feet again. To show that the Prime

^{35a.} Cf. p. 222.

^{36.} Cf. p. 235.

^{37.} *La Prensa*, New York, July 27, 1929.

35. *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, March 22, 1929.

Minister felt he was not fitted to direct the civil affairs of state, they quote the preamble of the document submitting to the King the decree by which the Military Directorate was constituted:

"But Your Majesty knows that neither I nor the persons associated with me in setting up a new régime believe ourselves to be fitted for the actual execution of ministerial duties; and that it was and continues to be our purpose to constitute but a brief parenthesis in the constitutional march of Spain, which will be terminated as soon as the country offers us men who are not tainted with the vices with which we charge the old political organizations. . . ."

In an attempt to create a non-political body in which "untainted" leaders might be trained, Primo de Rivera organized the *Unión Patriótica*. This body has also come in for its share of criticism. Although the Prime Minister has invited members of any political leaning whatever to join, it is made up solely of his supporters, for by his vigorous attacks upon the old political parties, he definitely alienated their members. In a statement to the press on June 12, 1928 the Prime Minister defended his cherished creation as follows:

"My declarations with regard to the organization and purpose of the *Unión Patriótica* have not been understood.

"Everyone likes to attack this organization, considering it an empty thing, without reality and without importance in the life of Spain.

They treat it with absolute disdain as though its acts and development merited such treatment. They are mistaken. The *Unión Patriótica* is something of mine which I have created to give to the nation a governing body which I have tried to surround with the maximum prestige, that it might never fall into the vices of the old political parties. It is an integral part of the constructive task to which I set myself on coming to power."

It may not have been the Prime Minister's original intention to favor members of the *Unión Patriótica* in any way, but in an address to that organization on September 13, 1928, outlining his policy, he set forth the doctrine of the control of the government by the citizen through the *Unión Patriótica*. In a later statement, "Epilogue of the Commemoration of September 13," this control was distributed as follows: in municipalities and provincial corporations, the Mayor, his deputy and four-fifths of the corporation must belong to the *Unión*; and only the remaining fifth may be chosen from among independent persons, regardless of political affiliations.³⁸

The failure of the Dictator to attract former leaders to the ranks of the *Unión Patriótica* explains to a great extent his inability to cope with the problem of securing experienced advice and of establishing a solid foundation for the government which is to succeed him.

EVIDENCES OF UNREST

Although the Prime Minister was greeted by non-political liberal elements in 1923 with more or less open minds, his repressive measures (especially the exile of Miguel de Unamuno, philosopher and rector of the University of Salamanca) slowly diminished his support among those ranks. When in 1927 a number of liberals were appointed to the Consultative National Assembly, many refused to serve, declaring that they did not wish to cooperate in an unconstitutional venture. Others, however, accepted the nomination, hoping that in matters with which they were familiar they might be able to aid in the process of reconstruction and speed the return to constitutional procedure. But in 1929 even this remnant of disinterested supporters is gradually deserting the Prime Minister, for they feel that their advice in the Assembly has little or no value.

Sr. Victor Pradera said on leaving the Assembly in March: "If our only rôle here is to praise, we may just as well stay home. Whenever we wish to express the least criticism the President rings his bell and obliges us to stop. This Assembly is, therefore, completely futile."³⁹

CIUDAD REAL REVOLT

Certain events during 1929 indicate this changing attitude toward the Dictatorship—viz., (1) the Ciudad Real artillery revolt in January-February 1929; (2) the student strike in March and (3) the recent press debate on the political future of Spain.

The Ciudad Real incident occurred on January 29 of this year. Nineteen garrisons at strategic railroad centers and ports

^{38.} Current History, December 1928.

^{39.} La Nación, Buenos Aires, March 23, 1929.

were implicated in the movement and the press, although unintentionally perhaps, created an atmosphere favorable to revolt by clamoring for steps which might lead to restoration of constitutional government. Even the conservative and most ardent non-official supporter of Primo de Rivera's régime—*El Debate*—was almost daily publishing editorials in the following vein:

"As to governmental measures looking to constitutional reform, they are very slow. In fact, they do not progress at all and it may be said that since the spring of 1928 they have become practically static. No one can deny the government's activities along other lines, but in this matter of the constitution it is certain that we have taken long vacations."

The revolt of January 1929 differs from that attempted by the Artillery Corps in 1926. It was not a purely military *coup*, for it was instigated and led by a former Conservative leader and ex-Minister, Sr. Sánchez Guerra. His program was to overthrow the de Rivera régime and restore the Constitution under the Monarchy while there still remained sufficient monarchical sentiment in Spain. The Artillery Corps was the ever-ready tool. Premature discovery of the Ciudad Real plot, however, led to the complete failure of the movement and numerous arrests were made.

In an effort to bolster up his régime both at home and abroad after the Ciudad Real incident, the Premier clamped the lid of speech and press restrictions down tighter and exhorted all Spaniards to remember that the welfare of the nation was at stake. Day after day in his official statements to the press he reminded the nation that any disorder would be reflected in the degree of success of the international expositions in Barcelona and Sevilla, and that nothing should happen to make it necessary for the Council of the League of Nations to cancel its meeting in Madrid.

In order to enforce his request, a series of drastic measures against all expression of criticism of the government's policies were taken. The *Unión Patriótica* and the *Somatén* (a patriotic militia organized by the Prime Minister) are now utilized as centers of information and espionage. By a decree of February 3 these organizations were required to keep a list of all persons who might reasonably be regarded as oppos-

ing the present régime in any way; and they were instructed to report any one overheard criticizing the latter. The decree of February 3 also provided that all government employees might be removed at will by government authorities; and that one-sixteenth of every newspaper's space must be reserved free of charge for government announcements.

These measures were followed on February 19 by a royal decree disbanding the Artillery Corps and closing the Segovia Artillery Academy, in which, it was alleged, the spirit of rebellion against the Dictatorship was perpetuated. The decree also provided for the reorganization by June 1 of the Artillery Corps. Any of its loyal members who wished to be readmitted to the corps were required to petition the government and to pledge their allegiance to Primo de Rivera's administration as well as to the King and the Constitution. The reorganization of the corps was postponed twice and it is practically impossible to ascertain how many former members have requested readmittance.

STUDENT STRIKES

In spite of these restrictive measures, the government soon had to face another crisis. Two of its decrees concerning educational matters were considered so arbitrary by the students that they went on strike in protest. The first of these was the decree already referred to, giving two Catholic universities the right to grant degrees. The second grew out of the Artillery Academy episode. The government alleged that by the closing of the Artillery Academy many loyal cadets had been unjustly punished. It therefore decreed in February that those who had not been involved in the disturbances at the school in Segovia preceding the revolt would be allowed to enroll in the Engineering School in Madrid and be given credit for work already done in the Segovia Academy. The engineering students resented the intrusion of such a number of extra competitors in their courses and charged that the group from the Artillery school would be receiving degrees for work much inferior to that which was required of themselves.

On March 9 a majority of the students of the University of Madrid went on strike and

tried to prevent other students from attending classes. The government ordered the police to intervene and in many parts of the city there were serious encounters between mounted police and students, although according to official statements no blood was shed.

Students and professors were soon protesting throughout the whole of Spain and on March 17 the government found it necessary to issue a series of decrees⁴⁰ which provided: (1) that the Central University of Madrid should be closed until October 1930; (2) that students in all but four official universities should lose their matricula, which however might be renewed after a second payment of tuition fees; and (3) that one month be added to the regular school year. Later decrees ordered the closing of the University of Oviedo on April 17 and the University of Barcelona (hitherto exempted from any sanctions) on April 22.

In many cases the faculties of these universities were accused of not upholding the government and of sympathizing with the students. In the Universities of Madrid, Barcelona and Oviedo and in the Segovia Artillery Academy, for example, the entire faculty and administrative body were suspended, while Royal Commissions were appointed to investigate the attitude of the professors.

The universities have subsequently been reopened, but since no mention has been made of the decrees against which the students protested, the incident cannot be considered closed.

The measures taken by the administration seem to have served merely to antagonize a powerful and numerous group, which previously had not been in active opposition to the Prime Minister. Thousands of families were involved in the seizure of tuition fees and the closing of the universities; and a number of Spain's most noted professors resigned.

Besides the opposition of the Artillery Corps and the university students, the Spanish government has had to deal with a luke-warm, and whenever occasion permitted, antagonistic press. One of the first decrees

issued by the Military Directorate after the coup d'état of September 13, 1923, was that of September 17, which imposed a strict censorship on political news. Occasionally the ban was lifted somewhat, apparently to discover how far press comment would go, but after each display of leniency the censor became even more severe. Early in April 1929 Primo de Rivera was reported as saying that the majority of the Spanish press was critical of his administration. On April 16, however, he corrected this statement, saying that he had been speaking only of the Madrid newspapers; but he added, "they make up in quality for what they lack in quantity." He also admitted that there was a great deal of opposition in the press throughout the rest of Spain.⁴¹

OPPOSITION PROGRAMS

This was quite evident, especially as the Dictatorship had allowed the publication by *El Sol*, an influential independent liberal paper, of its ideal political program. The mere fact that this was an article relating to politics would have had news value; but when *El Sol* declared its disbelief in the "consubstantiality of Monarchy and State," and proclaimed that the principle of responsibility should extend to the executive power, "whether King or President," there was an outburst of press opinion.

The following, *El Sol* declared, were its principal articles of faith:

1. The Monarchy is not synonymous with the Spanish State, nor is the form of government of fundamental importance. But whether the Executive be called King or President, he should be made responsible for his acts.

2. The Chief of State should appoint a Cabinet representing the majority in Congress. Should Congress by a two-thirds vote manifest its disapproval of a minister or the entire Cabinet, the minister or Cabinet should be superseded by a Moderator. The latter should have the right to dissolve Congress and call for new elections, if within a certain period the representatives of the people should three times in succession reject those appointed by the Executive Power.

3. The Legislative Power should be made up of a Chamber of Deputies, elected by secret ballot and direct universal suffrage, and an Assembly of Corporations, made up of a restricted representation of the various groups:

40. Published in *El Sol* and other Madrid papers, beginning March 19, 1929.

41. *El Sol*, April 17, 1929.

Church, Magistracy, and Army; and of commercial, industrial and workers' associations; syndicates, trade unions, etc.

4. The Judicial Power should be absolutely independent of the other two powers and superior to them. It should pass on the constitutionality of the acts of either the Legislature or the Executive without any exception.

5. The Army and Navy should be organized with a maximum of efficiency for defensive purposes.

6. In international matters, Spain should cooperate with the League of Nations, and should expand its cultural relations with Spanish America, the Philippines, Porto Rico and Portugal without the least tinge of imperialism. It also should demand the return of the City of Tangier and the international zone; and should seek to regain possession of Gibraltar.

7. The granting of degrees, as well as the functions of directing and inspecting education, should be the exclusive prerogative of the State, although private instruction should be allowed.

8. National unity is an intangible quality and should be strengthened through the granting of the most ample regional autonomy possible. The teaching of both the national and local vernacular should be fostered and officials in those regions where the common language is different from the national should be required to know both.

9. Religious liberty should be guaranteed and the exercise of any religion should be allowed; although it is recognized that the majority of Spaniards are Catholic.

10. The evil of latifundia [large landed estates] should be attacked by means of the distribution of lands to farm laborers or agrarian syndicates after indemnification to the former owners.

The State should not interfere in any form of legitimate private enterprise as long as it is not monopolistic.

11. The development of communications, especially state and county roads, as well as education should be the aim of all parties who aspire to the unification of Spain. Spain should produce only what it can produce most effectively and economically.

12. Labor problems should be solved by arbitration, and the social legislation which exists in other democratic countries should be emulated.

13. Liberty of speech, whether in public meetings or in the press, is the right of every person.

THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT

The torrent of comment which greeted this article was an indication of the great interest in the political future of Spain which

has been smothered for so long by the Dictatorship. It also was an indication of the trend of political thought during the last six years of censorship. As the conservative Catholic paper, *El Siglo Futuro*, pointed out, the trend has been definitely toward the left. This daily summarizes *El Sol's* program as follows:

"... It can be deduced that the aspirations of the groups for which *El Sol* is a medium of expression are: in the realm of politics, the principle of pure democracy, the people as the origin of power; in religion, liberty of thought and conscience, and neutrality . . . of the State, with equal respect for the exercise of all religions; and in the social order, the principle of the Socialist political economy to transform private into collective property."

El Siglo Futuro then asks:

"If this is the program defended by *El Sol*, whose contributors are socially conservative, bourgeois and 'orderly,' what program would such radical and anti-clerical papers as *Heraldo*, *La Libertad* and *El Socialista* advance?"

It went on to point out that the liberal groups had already rejected as "innocuous pap" that which they formerly were willing to accept as a compromise; and that the Socialist party had openly declared it was republican and was therefore divorced from any political nucleus supporting forms of government which differed from the one it upheld itself. *El Siglo Futuro* concluded as follows:

"As a consequence of everything that has been happening these years . . . a state of opinion has crystallized in Spain. And this opinion is not such as to evoke optimism . . . because the trend is toward the left—frankly toward the left . . ."

The greatest achievement of the Dictatorship would be the successful return to constitutional government. The publication of the draft constitution to replace that of 1876 is a most important indication that the time for such a change is approaching. The question is how that change will be introduced. Will the Prime Minister allow the formation of a political opposition party with a program similar to that published by *El Sol*, and then call for elections to a Constituent Assembly to discuss the new draft before it is submitted to a plebiscite? If not, one more grievance against the Dictatorship will be added to a growing list, and the opposition will be greatly strengthened.